

FREE AND APPOSITE

OBSERVATIONS

ON ONE VERY EVIDENT AND INDECENT CAUSE OF THE

PRESENT RAPID DECLINE

OF THE

CLERICAL CREDIT

AND CHARACTER;

IN A LETTER ADDRESSED TO THE RIGHT REVEREND
THE LORD BISHOP OF CHESTER.

THE SECOND EDITION.

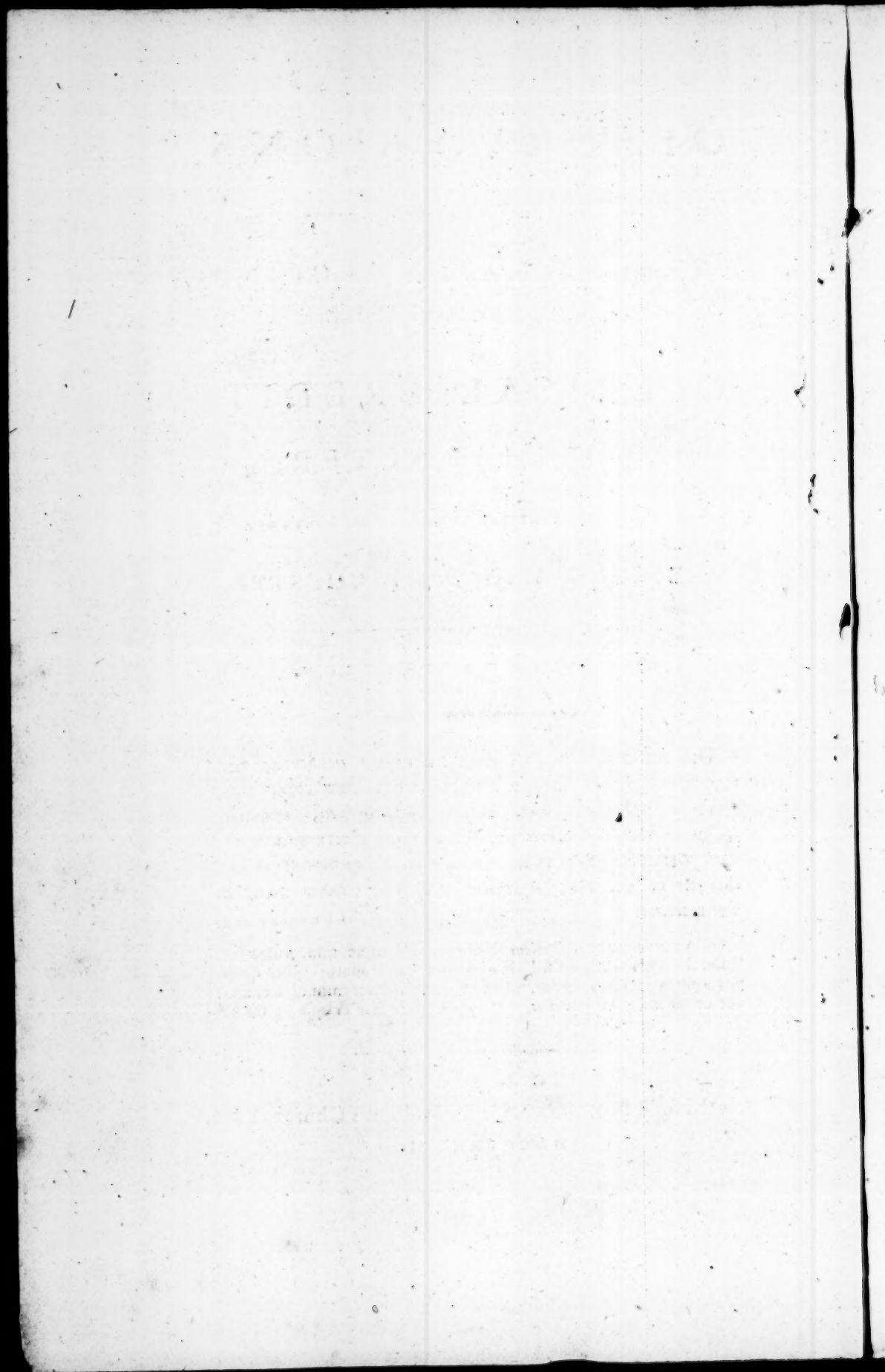
Πως ουκ ατοπον εις τοσαυτην λειτουργιαν μελλοντας τινα
εγγραφειν, απλως και ως ετυχεν, αν τω δεινι δοξη, προς
χαριν η προς απεχθειαν ετερων, μαρτυρησαι, εγκρινειν,
μηδεμιαν ποιουμενους εξετασιν; Τις εν ημας εξαιτησεται τοτε,
των οφειλοντων προστηναι και αυτων προσατων δεομενων;
Δει μεν εν και τον χειροτονειν μελλοντα, πολλην ποιεισθαι
την ερευνην.

CHRYSOSTOME.

Olim rara avis erat *Clericus* indoctus, sed nunc nihil vulgatus.
Quod si pergetis ut cæpistis citius anseres concionaturi sint, quam
vos multos pastores ferant. Videtis jam inverti mundi scenam:
aut deponenda, est persona, aut agendæ sunt suæ cuique partes.

ERASMUS.

L O N D O N:
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MDCCLXXXII.



P R E F A C E.

THE popular opinion, in many instances, is as contemptible as it is ill-founded. It is oftentimes below the concern of a good man, and unworthy the notice of a wise one. A sovereign scorn of it has been esteemed the peculiar result of an elevation of soul, and an unequivocal indication of the truest wisdom. This superiority to current calumnies hath formed

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the poet's rhapsody,* hath proved the philosopher's impenetrable armour, and supported the real patriot under the storms of obloquy, the pressure of exile, and the agonies of ignominious death. On occasions of this sort it is necessary, it is useful, it is laudable. It leads to generous plans of conduct, and it inspires resolution to attempt their accomplishment.

* ----- mihi parva rura, et
Spiritus Graiæ tenuem Camenæ
Parca non mendax dedit, & *malignum*
Spernere vulgus.

Virtus, recludens immeritis mori
Cælum, negata tentat iter via :
Cætusque vulgares, & udam
Spernit humum fugiente pennâ.

HORACE.

Lunæ portum est operæ cognoscere cives.
Hic, ego securus vulgi.

PERSIUS, Sat. VI.

It

It fortifies us against the probable event of ill success; and consoles us under the mortification of disappointment, the envious strife of tongues, and the envenomed shafts of low, illiberal reproach. When it is directed to these ends, and effects these purposes, it is the strength and blessing of those who possess it. But, then, its excellency entirely depends on this direction, and these effects. We are, unhappily, on many accounts, disposed to extend its influence, and to overstretch its tone. Self-deception obscures our moral discernment, and renders us unjust and incompetent judges of our own motives to action. We sometimes, perhaps, mistake them involuntarily.

voluntarily. But, oftentimes, through weakness which we might have prevented, or through wickedness which we are studious to conceal from our own view, we call that a contempt of popular rumour, which is no other than the lordly pride* of intoxicated reason, or the fordid vanity of blind self-love.†

FOR great occasions there are, when the public verdict is respectable,‡ and the public censure awful : when enormous abuses extort a general and just

* Odi profanum vulgus, & arceo.

† ----- Populus me sibilat; at mihi plaudo
Ipse domi.

‡ Interdum vulgus rectum videt.

HOR. passim.
disappro-

disapprobation : when the “Vox Populi” is, without a perversion of terms, the “Vox Dei ;” and when God and man alike insulted, alike condemn. In this case, no station can justify inattention. An audience is due from the highest ; and sovereigns themselves refuse to listen, at the peril of their salvation.

THE author of this publication professes to represent a grievance generally complained of, and grounded on incontrovertible facts. He hath had full and frequent opportunities of hearing, for he found himself under small necessity of asking, the opinions of men of almost all ranks upon this

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subject :

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subject : and their coincidence is as uniform as it is striking. Whether, or not, the *human*, be enforced by the stronger sanction of the *divine*, displeasure, in this instance, he leaves to the deliberate and conscientious consideration of his superiors. To crowned heads remonstrances have been presented. Those dignified with the mitre, can, with no colour of decency, object to a similar mode of address.

A POLISHED and splendid, yet sensible and serious writer,* hath "in the sincerity of his heart," and the flow of his philanthropy, against the force of habit, and the

* KNOX'S LIBERAL EDUCATION, Sect. XXXIX. p. 320.

prejudice

prejudice of education, exposed some inconveniences and even indecencies, permitted, or connived at, in two of the first and most respectable academical institutions in the whole world. Every honest man thinks with him : and has many obligations to him for the openness and integrity of his rebuke. For, each, and, particularly, the last, part of the education of those who are to assume public characters in life, is of unutterable consequence to society ; which has a right to insist that its instructors, advisers, and professors, be both well principled, and well accomplished. Yet, notwithstanding the justice and generosity of this reprimand,

no

no alteration has taken place ; and a reformation in some respects is still devoutly to be wished for, in our great, national, sister seminaries. The following remarks are founded on a corruption, in itself, of superior magnitude, and, in its consequences, of more extensive mischief. But considering the temper of the age, averse from restraint, and intolerant of correction ;—considering the spirit of a nation defeated, yet not humbled ; impoverished, yet licentious ; suffering by rebellion abroad, yet still seditious at home ; harraſſed, yet insolent ; disgraced, yet not aſhamed ; and though puniſhed, yet not penitent ;—there is ſlender hope that any forewarn-
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ings should obtain credit, or any attempt to reprove, attention. Yet, from those who teach others we naturally expect docility : they who are urgent to recommend a conscientious adherence to duty to their inferiors should be foremost to discharge their own with blameless and uninfluenced honesty ; and those who, from the eminence and high authority of their station, resemble “ a city set upon a hill, which cannot be hid,” should be careful to “ give no offence, that their ministry be not “ blamed.” But, whatever be the issue of this address, the writer of it will be perfectly at ease. He is not ignorant of the unpopular character, nor unprepared to

to meet the usual fate, of a reformer.

STILL, the perilous situation in which we stand, should rouse us from the fatal lethargy in which our senses seem locked up. The subject of the following pages may not, perhaps, be unconnected with our national disasters; and certainly forms one amongst our other national disgraces.

THERE is no surer sign of the present decline and impending ruin of establishments, whether civil, or ecclesiastical, than when the profligate are invested with the insignia of virtue, the weak are protruded into offices of public

lic trust, and the ignorant or the idle are suffered to disgrace stations and employments, which to fill with dignity and to conduct with honour, the full lustre of learning, and the utmost vigour of the best cultivated talents, are not more than sufficient. We know what a rabble of nominal consuls presided, or rather assisted, at the miserable obsequies of the magnificent Roman republic : and we are minutely informed what ignorance, duplicity, obduracy, and infatuation characterised the sacerdotal and pontifical orders amongst the Jews, on the approach of the subversion of their theocracy or polity, and on the very verge of their completest and
conclusive

conclusive castigation. We seem no longer in a state to profit by the loud admonitions of heaven conveyed so strongly in the excision of other nations, in the calamities of our own, and in those monuments of history, both sacred and profane, with which the libraries of the learned are so amply stored. The godless modern philosophy, disdains to be instructed by experience or by example ; excludes Providence from the immense mass of the universe, and denies all Divine interposition in the senseless conflicts, or rather the accidental collisions, of merely material beings, which so tremendously shake and convulse this distracted system. The anxious
appre-

apprehensions of the believer, extorted by the sickly aspect of the times, it regards as the reveries of a pious delirium, and it is even to be doubted whether there be not so strong a tincture of free-thinking in the church, as to induce some of those whom it most materially affects to attribute the sentiment of the venerable patriarch* alluded to in the note, not to the clearness of his discernment, or to the fervour of his piety,

* CHRYSOSTOME assigns the calamities of his own times to the number of unworthy and unqualified members introduced into the church. This connection, it seems, is not fanciful. "When the Roman learning declined with the empire, religion sympathized with it, being over-run with heresies, contentions, superstitions: till *ignorance*,
" corruption

piety, but to an over-heated frantic zeal, or to a blind and abject superstition.

IF such motives are assigned to such a character, what meaner imputations may not be applied, and what more opprobrious inducements expected to be attributed, to the writer of this letter? He can only say that he anticipates this treatment. He is happy that he can justify his conduct to

“ corruption of manners, and the invasion
 “ of Barbarians, were alike destructive to religion and science. This was the fatal
 “ completion of that prophecy of *Isaiab*,
 “ which imputes the ruin of religion and
 “ the empire to the *ignorance* and vices of
 “ the Roman clergy.”

DR. APTHORPE.

himself :

himself: and he looks forward to the event of it with undismayed composure. He is neither ashamed of his cause, nor of his company. He is armed at all points. He shall count it joy either to contend, or to suffer, for the one; and hold it honour beyond estimation great to be misrepresented, or abused, with the other.

OBSERVATIONS



ON THE RAPID DECLINE OF THE

CLERICAL CREDIT

AND CHARACTER.

MY LORD,

L - OUD complaints have been lately made, and just grounds of offence taken, at an evil of an alarming and increasing nature. It is the admission of men of no talents, no acquirements, no education, into the church. There is so much impolicy, as well as impropriety; there is so much indiscretion, as well as absurdity; there is so much indecency, as well as injustice, in this conduct; so much disgrace accrues to the church

in particular, and such infinite detriment is done by it to religion in general, that I find myself strongly impelled to lay before your lordship, and the other heads of our Establishment, the sentiments of the public on this subject, and the consequences which must obviously result from a custom, replete with the very worst effects upon the very best interests both of Christianity and of virtue. It is with the utmost propriety that your lordship is addressed on this subject. You stand altogether clear of suspicion.—You have neither act nor part, in the mischief complained of:—In this, as well as every other department of your episcopal duty, you have proceeded with invariable circumspection, vigilance and good conscience; and have been uniformly careful to admit to Holy Orders such only as, you had the most satisfactory reason to believe, would not, either by the poverty of their parts, the

the glaring impropriety of their education, or their notorious deficiency in learning, reflect disgrace, or bring discredit, either upon their office or their order. Truth in general, like the religion of JESUS, offends only those who have first offended against it. I shall write, therefore, with the greater freedom, because your lordship may attend without conscious embarrassment, and, at your leisure, read without remorse.

It was formerly, my lord, some consolation to the honest, faithful, attentive churchman, that if his teacher was not so remarkable for the warmth and animation of his manner;—had not so impassioned a tone of voice;—exhibited not the same variety of gesticulations, or force of vociferation, as the Dissenter and Fanatic, yet he was instructed to reach the graces of a juster style:—From his literary and critical skill, he was competent to explain the

Scriptures, and “ rightly to divide the word of truth :” He confirmed his positions by sound reason ; he authorised them by the unerring sanction of revelation : The excellency of his *matter*, in short, made more than adequate compensation for the insipidity of his *manner* ; and his discourses were, in point of doctrine, orthodox ; and in point of composition, well arranged, judicious, manly, energetic. But since this slovenly method of the indiscriminate admission of all comers into the church has been adopted, we seem to be in high hazard of losing our last argument ; and shall not be long left in possession of this solitary apology. It is really distressing to reflect that, whereas, when the enthusiast made a monopoly of *faith*, we had still left some little claim upon *learning*, we can now, in multiplying instances, plead our privilege to neither ; but are utterly bereaved both of *science* and of *grace*,
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We can no longer blame the unprincipled latitudinarian, and implicit solidian, that they are ready to run after any new light held out by any moon-stricken mechanic : The observation recoils : The retort is applicable to us ; and these wild fires are kindled, are fostered, are permitted to blaze, in the CHURCH, no less than in the conventicle.

IN most secular concerns, in the polite professions of law and medicine, and even in trade, men are compelled to become masters of their business, before they can practise, either with safety, or success. Their profession is the object of their lives and of their labours. But the sacred profession, it should seem, is compatible with all stations, accommodate to all employments, and congenial with all dispositions. It may be exercised by the prince or by the subject, by the doctor

or by the drawer, by the sanguine or by the saturnine, by the learned or by the unlearned, by those who are masters of many languages, and those, who know not even their own. The gift, now, as of old, is rapid and miraculous; the call, oftentimes, unexpected and instantaneous. Like the conversions of the *Tabernacle*, or the new birth of the apostle of the *Foundery*, it is abrupt, impetuous, and irresistible.

IN days of Yore, when the primitive fathers were superstitious enough to deem the pastoral function of some consequence, its importance, its duties, its difficulties were dwelt upon, were held out to public view, in terms of force, perhaps of exaggeration. However, this opinion was, then, in general request with the serious, and made a pretty general impression. The candidates who had acquired a proper sense of this office, never offered themselves
till

till after many arduous trials of their sufficiency. Their novitiate was long, laborious, and fatiguing. And one of the most eloquent of all the fathers, after his character and abilities were well established, and he was summoned by the public voice to undertake the Apostolate, impressed with an awful idea of his own imagined insufficiency, and of the vast weight of the charge to be supported by him, seceded, for a season, from the presence, and eluded the most diligent inquiries, of his friends. But the case, it appears, is, now, far other. No one manifests a reluctance, none is backward to urge his pretensions, to the evangelic mission. No student secedes during the Ember Weeks ; no undergraduate shrinks from the imposition of hands. Even the highest distinctions, and most arduous offices, of their order raise little emotion in the minds of modern clerks ; and, now, no reverend doctor trembles at the offer of
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the mitre and the lawn. These awkward tremors are, now, regarded as the mere effects of antient simplicity;—as the blushings of religion yet coy and immature;—as the affected prudery of Christianity, then crude, and chaste, and unobtrusive.

RESPECTING our preparatory qualifications too we seem equally indifferent. These are discovered to be a work of supererogation. They were, formerly, demanded as a prior, they are, now, not seldom, made a posterior, condition. The operose and conscientious systems of Chrysostom and of Burnet are demolished or exploded. The reluctant scrupulosity of a St. Basil, with the sublime theory of a Gregory Nazianzen are derided and done away. The learned dreams of these pious visionaries are rejected, with all the fastidious disdain of fashionable refinement. Academic discipline or graduation, formerly, first fitted

fitted the student for his future office : but this order of things is, now, oftentimes, with admirable dexterity, reversed. The student is first and freely made a divine, and promises to qualify afterwards. Make him a deacon, and he engages to become a theologian : induct him to a valuable incumbency, and he will, in time, turn out an egregious parish priest. This, naturally, reminds one—pardon, my lord, the pleasantry of this allusion,—it naturally reminds one of the sage advice of the old lady to her daughter, when Miss refused to marry because she did not like her man : “ Marry him first, child,” rejoined the experienced matron, “ and, trust your mother, you will love him afterwards.” It is exactly similar to the monition of a certain right honourable lady to one of her convert clergy, “ that he “ should preach Christ as he knew him “ then, till he knew him better.” Or perhaps this recent reverse of things may

may be grounded on authority higher than that of either of the respectable females above cited. The argument adduced in vindication of this, otherwise unaccountable, custom, may be of the same species with that, used by the facetious monarch Charles II. who gave a living in Suffolk to one of his chaplains, whom he knew to be a consummate blockhead : And the effect proved the propriety of the donation : " For," as the king afterwards observed, " his nonsense suited the nonsense of his parishioners, and so he brought them all to church." *

BUT, my lord, I hasten to relinquish this levity of manner, and to adopt a style more suited to the serious subject of this address, and to the respectable character I am addressing. The age is signalized by its bold impieties. Pro-

* BISHOP BURNET's History of his own Time, vol. I. p. 437.

fane and presumptuous speculations are daily engendered and disseminated. Infidelity confessedly gains ground upon us. An artful, able, and heavy attack hath been, lately, made upon the religion of this country. Nor is the church less harrassed and shaken. Every impression inimical to Christianity affects her to her vitals. Nor is this all. The rancorous sectarist and untractable enthusiast are her inveterate and relentless enemies. Their opposition is persevering, and not rarely effectual; whilst our own supineness and indolence give them but too many opportunities of probable success. Now, at this alarming crisis, an inundation of undisciplined mercenaries is suffered to overflow the flood: And these unformed, ill-taught, raw recruits our governors sagaciously oppose to the subtle metaphysics of a Helvetius,* the sarcastic insinuations

* It is matter of much consolation to the serious mind, that amidst the fluctuating, gloomy, and malignant

sinuations of a Raynal, the polemic skill and matchless hardihood of Pr—ley, and the decided abilities of G—n.

WHEN Tindal published his infamous book entitled *Christianity as old as the Creation*, a zealous prelate of that period laid himself out to discover, and select some able divine to answer him. Dr. Connybeare was fixed upon; and was, by the same good bishop, allowed, what was, then, emphatically termed,

malignant lucubrations of modern theorists, some spirit, of more friendly disposition to our dearest hopes and interests, exerts itself to counteract the poison of their profane positions. The *material* which is only a qualified term for the *atheistic*, and the *necessarian*, which is merely a substitute for the *calvinistic*, hypothesis, are both of them exposed, and refuted in the most masterly manner by Monsieur de Luc, in his *Lettres physiques et morales sur l' Histoire de la Terre et de l' Homme adressees a la Reine de la Grande Bretagne*. A translation of this voluminous, animated, and entertaining work is a desideratum in *English* natural philosophy, and might do infinite good. It is written in the spirit of Boyle and Newton, with equal piety and philanthropy.

pen,

pen, ink and paper. Nor did he stop here. This work was made the foundation of the learned doctor's great succeeding promotion. What a different reception does a defence of the truth meet with at present! An author of signal eloquence set himself down in ~~to~~, to invalidate the strongest proofs of the religion of his country; and some few divines have made good attempts to answer and expose him. The issue of this controversy, I mean the personal consequence of it to the parties concerned, has been most remarkable. The professed enemy of Christianity hath been nauseated with studied compliments, and advanced to a post of public, lucrative, and honourable employment; whilst none of his refuters have been noticed or rewarded, in an *extraordinary*, and only one of them in *any*, degree. Whilst this open encouragement is given to scepticism, whilst the advocates of religion are thus left
without

without esteem or reward, another calamity is superadded to these, and a number of unworthy members are introduced into the church. The Bishops may not all of them have it in their power either to degrade the profane, or to hand forward the meritorious; but they have all of them authority to repress the audacious, and to drive away the unqualified, pretender. If this power had been uniformly exerted, the writer of this paper had never had the ill fate to discuss this mortifying subject. But to the great offence of the pious, and the immortal disgrace of the church, artificers of various kinds, and tradesmen of different mechanical occupations have been dignified with the sacerdotal office.

I COULD, my lord, enumerate the respective callings of the whole vile group: And the list would be ludicrous and ignominious enough, and do sufficient

ficient discredit to those who assigned them their commissions. But there is ONE instance which, as it exceeds all the rest in absurdity, deserves not to be concealed. The previous destinations of the former had small reference to their present profession as clergymen, and were by no means sufficient to justify their pretensions to it;—but to take a *server of ale*, TO SERVE AT THE ALTAR, to commission a man who had never acted in a more reputable capacity than that of an assistant at a common inn, TO MINISTER IN THE TEMPLE TO HOLY THINGS, was an appointment left to do credit to the authorised decision and sacred selection of a bishop of the eighteenth century.*

DR.

* A *sagacious* abbot, in Erasmus, assigns motives of a very ludicrous and laughable species for a similar practice, though there can be no possible reason to suspect that these motives have any force in the present age of light and learning. “Ego nolim meos

C

“monachos

DR. WARBURTON, who was a most illustrious, it has been said, was an impracticable, character. That he was so to men of a certain description, the writer of these strictures is free to acknowledge. To blockheads he *was* impracticable: but to unassuming merit he was ever condescending, and even courteous. To men of letters and of genius, whom he instantly and almost instinctively recognized, he was uniformly accessible, obvious, and affable:—and Dr. Warburton would have sacrificed his mitre, and have been mulcted at the expence of his life, rather than have soiled his classic hand, by abject and impure contact with a head which nature and education had united to form a heteroclite in all its

“ monachos frequentes esse in libris. Exuperior illos
 “ minus morigeros. Non amo monachum respon-
 “ torem: neque velim quenquam meorum plus fa-
 “ pere quam ego sapiam. Librorum Familiaritas
 “ parit Infaniam.”

powers

powers of apprehension, penetration, and intelligence.

BUT this is not all. He would have respected his own character not less than that of the candidate for holy orders. He would have paid some decent regard to the opinion of the public, and with all the sensibility of fine genius, on no account, indifferent to the general verdict, would have looked forward with awe, to a decision, which, common sense suggests, will always, necessarily, follow so shameless a *prostitution* of the sacred function.

FOR, if a man of weak head and vulgar habits is set over me, as my teacher, am I not capable and concerned to judge, both respecting his abilities and accomplishments? Am I not strongly interested in them both? And is not the whole Church of God interested in them? What a *sacrilegi-*

ous BURLESQUE upon the very name of religion is it, to hear a man, whose common conversation tells you that he is uninstructed, even in the rudiments of language, and who cannot write a common billet without betraying his deficiency in the commonest orthography,—what an *outrageous insult* upon public sense, and public decency, is it, to hear a fellow, whose former occupation you know to have been of the most servile order, whose judgment never bore him beyond the appreciation of good liquor, and whose ideas never exceeded the calculation of a reckoning, with assumed solemnity of face, admonishing his former customers on the most momentous topics ; in the presence of God and man, arrogating the office of a DIVINE MESSENGER, and declaiming with all imaginable complacency, and much self-consequence, on the ORIGIN OF EVIL, the reality, perhaps the nature, of the HYPOSTATIC UNION ; the consistency

sistency of the ETERNAL DECREES OF GOD, with the *moral agency of man*; the *profoundest dispensations* of PROVIDENCE; and the most INSCRUTABLE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN!

BUT this affair merits a more minute detail. *Vocantur ergo in concilium proceres.* We will suppose then, a consultation of prelates to be summoned. These,—some of the prelates of England, the seat of science, the land of liberty, the source of the *improved philosophy*, and the abode of the *reformed religion*, meet in solemn synod.

“ Albanam dux magnus in arcem
 “ Traxerat attonitos, & festinare coactos,
 “ Tanquam de Cattis aliquid, torvisque Sicambris
 “ Dicturus; tanquam diversis partibus orbis
 “ Anxia præcipiti venisset epistola pennâ.”

Every brow is fraught with wisdom,
 every feature modelled to gravity,
 every mouth mute with expectation.

At length the cause of their convention is announced, and this difficult, this perplexing, this intricate, this involved, this important question is proposed:— Whether a man shall be admitted to ordination, who, it is well known, can neither read accurately, spell tolerably, nor converse grammatically; and who has never acted in any other than a subordinate capacity in a country inn. Difficulties might present themselves, and objections be started, but the recommendation of our young host, by a pair of peers prevents every negative, over-rules all opposition, and sweeps before it every obstacle to his wishes. Every bishop is charmed into compliance, and the whole assembly, or however the majority, unite in one polite accord. So instant, so obsequious, so implicit is their assentation, that the world is not without suspicion; that if to the young man a young maid had been added by the noble recommenders,

menders, the courtly bishops would, at the least, have put her to her vote. I told your lordship, in the beginning of this letter, that I should write with all possible freedom. I have not disappointed your lordship. I have here, without hesitation, given you a current report, with the current comment. And if, my lord, there be *any* foundation for it, it is, upon the whole, a lamentably ludicrous business. It is one of those mock-heroic, tragi-comic, sacro-profane incidents, at which

“ To laugh were want of goodness and of grace ;

“ And to be grave exceeds all pow’r of face.”

THAT two noble lords, of whom the one possesses as good a heart, and maintains as respectable a moral character as any in this realm ; and the other is as distinguished for his great abilities as he is for his high office,—that, this, as amiable a man, and that, as able a

magistrate, the Mæcenæ of his former years, the confidential friend of W—— and of P——, and the acknowledged patron of the learned, the elegant, the all-accomplished H——, that these two should, if they did, join in * recommending to ordination a man, of whose mental qualifications, if they had any, they must have had the vilest conception; and of whose education, if they had a just, they must have had the most contemptible, idea;—the whole of this forms an event of so

* NOBLEMEN who are the public guardians of the established religion, should be careful whom they recommend to the church. They should suit their respective dependents with correspondent departments. There are so many state offices in their power that they have no apology for foisting the uneducated and unlearned into the church. This is giving to the idle the bread of the industrious: it is rewarding the worthless with the wages of the deserving, Hence merit sickens in secret; and literature must proportionably languish in public. Hence the pious are offended, the superstitious rendered wretched, and religion receives a deadly wound.

extra-

extraordinary, so mysterious, so inexplicable a nature, that it may well indeed excite the serious contemplation, and raise the just concern, but will for ever mock the solution, of a wondering world.

BUT that there should be found gentlemen and clergymen in his own neighbourhood, to whom as well the inferiority of his capacity, as of his station, was actually known, passive enough not to refuse a testimonial in his favour, and mean enough to join in the common imposture:—and that any clergyman should descend so far as to grant a nomination on this occasion,—These are facts which the world is not so concerned to account for, as it is free to censure, and privileged to condemn.

STILL, it may perhaps be contended, that a testimonial, attested by so many,

many, so different, and so respectable characters, merited attention, and, in some sort, compelled the bishops to compliance. But let us not be deceived by appearances. What is the end, the aggregate, and amount of this boasted recommendation? The requisition of a testimonial was very properly enacted to preclude all enormous offenders from the pale of the altar; and it ought, no doubt, to be rigidly insisted upon, lest any clergyman should be found obnoxious by the commission of gross and scandalous immoralities,

“Ne quis fur esset, neu latro, neu quis adulter.”

BUT, my lord, is this all? Is THIS alone sufficient to qualify a man for the office of a *deacon* or a *priest*? The *labourer*, then, in my field, and the *lacquey* in your lordship's retinue, have as good a title to the same respectable moral testimony, and the same elevation of employment.

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THE author of these observations is anxious not to be misunderstood. He is particularly solicitous not to throw the least asperision on the moral character of the hero of this misadventure. He takes leave therefore in this place to declare, that he believes there is so radical an apathy in his disposition, and so copious a stream of *sang froid* in his constitution, that they will, without the borrowed aid of principle, preserve him as free from immoderate vice, as the native stupor of his head will, for ever, render him guiltless of wit. In these respects he is singularly happy. The one is a specific against excess, the other against ingenuity. This makes him not offensive, and that, not immoral. The one constitutes him grave, the other not graceless. In short, and to generalise this sketch, he is a neutral, insipid, unmeaning character ; heavy, harmless, and useless ; incapable of teaching, or
of

of being taught; neither disposed to do much harm, nor gifted to do *any spiritual* good. If such labourers are wanted, at this day, in the gospel harvest, I congratulate the church, his recommenders and electors, on his accession to the former number.

THE preceding delineation, the designer of it has drawn with the most guarded impartiality; and thus far, had the place in agitation been in the excise, or the customs, or indeed the office of a parish-clerk, he could have conscientiously ventured to have testified in favour of the subject of it. But to some bishops, my lord, I would not have gone so far. Some of the order are too mild and mansuete, and *exercise mercy with a vengeance*: And whether it be through superstition, or an early acquaintance with the sentiments of the fathers on this subject, or an extravagant reverence for the clerical order, or
whatever

whatever worse or better cause, yet so it is that the writer of this letter is possessed with so vivid a sense of the high importance, the complicated duties, and superior difficulties of the SACRED OFFICE, that he thinks those chargeable with no common degrees of guilt, who are directly or indirectly instrumental in the ordination of one insufficient, unqualified, and consequently unworthy minister.

THE common, the canonical qualification for a deacon is to be had at a very trifling expence both of time and attention, and even the qualification stated by Bishop Burnet (which in my opinion is the lowest that ought to be admitted) that learned divine asserts, is to be acquired within the short compass of two years.* The great, the

* BISHOP BURNET'S scheme comprizes the following particulars. After having, as he asserts, dispatched the first and "chief part of the preparation
"tion

the indefatigable archbishop of Constantinople lays it down as a position,

“tion necessary *before orders*,” he proceeds “to the
 “*learning* and to the *knowledge* that is *necessary*.” He
 then premises that it is not his purpose to “enter
 “into a discourse of theological learning, of the
 “measure that is necessary to make a *complete divine*,
 “and of the methods to attain it:”—His intention
 is only to “lay down that which he looks upon
 “as the *lowest degree*, and that which seems *indispens-*
 “*ably necessary*.” He proceeds:—“He must then
 “*understand* the New Testament *well*. He must read
 “it so often over, that he may have an idea of the
 “whole book in his head, and of the parts of it. He
 “must *understand the Greek* so well, as to be able to
 “find out the meaning of every period in it, at least
 “of the words and phrases. Grotius, Hammond and
 “Lightfoot, are recommended as commentators. He
 “must *have* a great deal of the practical part of it.
 “In short, the being able to *state right* the grounds of
 “our hope, and the terms of our salvation, and the
 “*having a clear and ready view* of the new covenant in
 “Christ Jesus is of *such absolute necessity* that it is
 “A PROFANING OF ORDERS AND A DEFILING OF
 “THE SANCTUARY to bring any into it that *do*
 “*not rightly understand* this matter in its *whole extent*.
 “Bishop Pearson, Dr. Barrow, and Dr. Towerfon
 “on the Creed are, one or other of them, to be *well*
 “*read and considered*,—to be *read over and over again* till
 “one is *master* of one of these books: He must *write*

“*notes*

tion, which I dare affirm he had no
suspicion of being controverted, that
the

“ notes out of them, and *make abridgements* of them,
“ and turn them *so oft* in his thoughts, that he must
“ *thoroughly understand, and well remember them.* He
“ must read the Psalms *so carefully* as to have a
“ general notion of them: Patrick’s Paraphrase will
“ assist him.—A system of divinity must be read *with*
“ *exactness*: By a perusal of Turretin for the whole
“ Calvinist hypothesis, and of Limborch for the
“ Arminian, he is to make himself fully the master
“ of all the notions on both sides. To these may be
“ added the Theses of Saumur or Le Blanc’s. These
“ books are to be *well read, digested into abstracts,* and
“ *frequently reviewed.* The foundation of religion, as
“ well natural as revealed, must be well laid.—Bishop
“ Wilkin’s book of Natural Religion, Grotius on
“ the Truth of the Christian Religion, and Bishop
“ Stillingfleet’s *Origines Sacrae*, are particularly
“ requisite. Bishop Saunderson, Mr. Farrington,
“ and Dr. Barrow, as the best and fullest models of
“ the right method of preaching, are to be read
“ from the time that any one resolves to direct his
“ studies towards the church.”—In the conclusion
he declares that “ these studies seem so *necessary for*
“ *qualifying* his student to be an able minister of the
“ New Testament, that he cannot see HOW ANY AR-
“ TICLE CAN BE WELL ABATED.” He supposes that
a man of “ a tolerable capacity, with a good degree
“ of application, may go through all this, well and
“ exactly

the intellectual endowments or powers
of a pastor ought to be as much su-
perior

“ exactly in two years time. And can this,” he asks,
“ be thought a hard imposition? Or do not those who
“ think thus, give great occasion to the CONTEMPT
“ OF THE CLERGY, if they give the world cause to
“ observe, that how much soever we may magnify our
“ profession, yet by our practice, we shew that we do judge
“ it the meanest of all others, which is to be arrived at
“ upon less previous study and preparation to it, than any
“ other whatsoever?”

BURNET'S Pastoral Care, Chap. vii.

BUT if, after all, it should be objected that this good bishop is too severe, and expecting it may be asked where or when a more easy and superficial scheme has been pointed out and allowed to be sufficient? Chrysostom's PASTOR, and Mr. Professor Fordyce's PREACHER, are as finished characters as Cicero's or Quintilian's PERFECT ORATOR. Bishop Wilkins's ECCLESIASTES, formed on the plan he has laid down, would be little inferior to either.

IF Dr. Swift's Plan of Advice to a young Clergyman is more liberal, it is not less laborious, than that of Bishop Burnet.

DR. St. George enlarges upon the importance and difficulties of the ministerial office, and opens a wide field for previous assiduity and literary labour.

BISHOP

perior to those of his flock, as Saul was in stature to the surrounding people.

BISHOP PORTEUS, in his printed instructions, prescribes a form of study more systematic and complicated than either of these, and insists upon a considerable share of human learning, a comprehensive knowledge of Christianity, and a clear conviction of the authenticity, with a well digested recollection of the contents, of the New Testament, as conditions, without which he will admit none to Holy Orders.

DR. APTHORPE, whose learning can only be equalled by his generous ardour for the cause of Christianity, and his anxiety for the best interests of the church, has pointed out a course of study for the young theologian more extensive, learned, and laborious, than the preceding. See his *Sermon, preached at the Consecration of the present Bishop of Gloucester, and published by command of his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury.*

DR. KEEN, the late bishop of Ely, is called by Dr. C. Middleton "a very sensible and agreeable man." None who partook of his civilities, can think this character over-charged. For it must be acknowledged, that to an uncommon degree of prudence, he added, as considerable a share of politeness;—and in candour and courtesy was inferior to few. Yet notwithstanding these yielding qualities, he could, on proper occasions, act with proper firmness. A clergyman of his diocese, a graduate of one of the universities, and the younger son of a very respectable family, had only been admit-

ple.* “But this representation,” it may be suggested by our modern super-

ted into deacon's orders. A living in the gift of his brother was vacant, and he applied for priest's orders, to qualify himself for induction. By great assiduity, for he was naturally of very untoward parts, he had made himself master of the four gospels in the original Greek, and was in other respects, tolerably well founded in the knowledge and nature of the Christian faith. Yet notwithstanding the peculiar circumstance of the family living; notwithstanding the more urgent plea of a wife and seven children, he was rejected as unqualified, and lived and died a curate. In this instance of ordination, the bishop remained inflexibly steady to his duty, and was not to be moved by the very best interest and application. This anecdote is related on the most respectable authority. It was always mentioned to the bishop's honour, and the same conscientious and religious adherence to the regular line of episcopal conduct will always insure the same share of applause.

* Ἀγεσθωσαν δὲ εἰς μέσον οἱ πολλὰ τῷ μέτρῳ πλεονεκτήν-
τες ἀπαντῶν καὶ τοσούτων ὑψηλότεροι τῶν ἄλλων κατὰ τὴν
τῆς ψυχῆς ἀρετὴν, ὅσον τὸ παντὸς ἔθνος Ἑβραίων κατὰ το-
τὲ σώματος μέγεθος ὁ Σαυλ· μαλλόν δὲ καὶ πολλὰ πλεον.
Μη γὰρ μοι μόνον ὑπερωμίας ἐνταυθα ζητῆσθαι μέτρον· ἀλλ'
οὐ καὶ πρὸς τὰ ἀλογα τῶν λογικῶν ἀνθρώπων ἡ διαφορὰ, τοσού-
τον τὸ ποιμενὸς καὶ τῶν ποιμαινομένων ἐγὼ τὸ μέσον, ἵνα μὴ
καὶ πλεον τι εἴπω.

CHRYSOSTOM. de Sacerd. Lib. II.
ficial

ficial presbyters, “ is made in the figurative phraseology of the east, and “ was properly enough addressed to “ the glowing imaginations and ardent “ passions of the orientals. *Sed nunc hic dies aliam vitam adfert, alios mores postulat.*

This is a weak objection, and not worthy an answer. But, for the sake of brevity, allowing it more force than it really possesses, still *some* qualification must be contended for; and if *any* be thought requisite, or allowed to be necessary, I do insist upon it, that to ordain a man, *who is absolutely and altogether ignorant of all the dead languages, and who does not half understand any living one*, is a presumptuous and abominable abuse of a most SACRED SOLEMNITY. And, my lord, I will be bold, to assert, that no alledged authority, no arrogance, no assumption on the part of the diocesan, no plea of con-

venience, of inclination, or even of necessity, no interest, *no recommendation*, no reason whatever on the part of the petitioner, is sufficient to palliate, much less to justify so egregious, so unpardonable, so flagrant a profanation of this holy office. For, is not this literally to present the censor "to hewers of wood, and drawers of water?" Is it not to "consecrate whoever will become a priest?" Is it not to make the temple of God "a place of merchandise," and to convert "the house of prayer into a den of thieves?" Is it not to secularise whatever is most sacred? *Prò deûm atque hominum fidem! quid est, si non hæc contumelia est?* And, IN GOD'S NAME, what is, if this is not, in one obvious sense, "the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place?"

THE actual power of a bishop, in this case, is by no means arbitrary or indefinite.

indefinite. It is restricted by canon,* by custom, by the law of God, and the institutions of man; and after this, if it can at all be deemed discretionary, it is so only in a qualified sense. It is discretionary in the same degree that his integrity, or his humility, or his chastity, is so. He may, if he pleases, persevere in the practice of these virtues; or he may be guilty of the breach of them all. He *may*, I say, if he is so disposed, be dishonest, or proud, or impure; but that *he ought*, or has a

* THE canon enjoins that "no bishop shall henceforth admit any person into sacred orders, except he be able to yield an account of his faith in Latin." Now to do this in a comprehensive form (and surely the words imply no less) requires no slight or superficial acquaintance with that language. There are ways, it is true, of giving this account with little labour and less learning. There are pitiful methods of evasion in all professions: and even on an occasion of this sort (*nusquam tuta fides*) a man may be connived at, when he is able to give this account only partially; or if a better account be required, he may be suffered to answer by proxy, or by a prompter.

right to be so, is not yet in proof. Just so is it with his privilege to ordain. He has a power committed to him, and a most awful delegation it is, to appoint and authorise *proper* persons, to preach and propagate the gospel; and he *may* be either faithful or unfaithful in the dispensation of this authority. He may, if he be careless or corrupt enough, select and send out the insufficient, the ignorant, and the inactive:—He may, if he be weak or wicked enough, ordain his *perruquier*, or his *porter*. But whoever supposed that he had a right so to do? Who can demonstrate, that free agency and impunity are inseparable, or even compatible, in any *finite* being? Who is not made acquainted, that a bishop binds himself, by the most solemn asseveration and obligation, to be “faithful in ordaining, sending, or laying hands upon others; that it is his duty to use his authority to salvation, not to
“destruction;

“destruction ; to help, not to hurt ?”
 And that he is commanded by the infallible word of inspiration, “to lay
 “hands suddenly on no man, neither
 “to partake of other men’s sins, but
 “to keep himself pure ?” And who
 does not hence know, that, by every
 indiscreet act of this nature, he becomes
 obnoxious to the contempt of all good
 men, and is accountable to God for all
 the mischiefs flowing from so perfidious
 a deviation from his duty ? *

IF ever, my lord, there was a time
 when human learning was superfluous
 and human wisdom vain, it must be in
 the infancy of the Church : When the
 spirit was poured down in rapid and co-
 pious showers on the highly blessed be-
 liever, and the minds of the faithful,
 irradiated by the bright beams, and in-

* Ο γαρ την εξουσιαν παρασχων τω βελομενω διαφθειραι την
 Εκκλησιαν, οτος αν ειη των υπ’ εκεινου τολμηθεντων αιτιος.

CHRYSOSTOM. de Sac. Lib. IV.

vigorated by the cheering influence of celestial light, had no doubts to extinguish their convictions, and stood in less need of the artificial method of didactic instruction:—When according to the prediction of their lord and leader they had a mouth and an utterance given them irresistible and unanswerable!—When DIVINE eloquence flowed, like a native stream, from the tongue of the untutored, and the advocates of religion were not solicitous to premeditate their apologies:—“ When
“ the ministers of the New Testament
“ were made able, not only in the
“ letter, but the spirit, of it;—when
“ their speech and their preaching was
“ not with the enticing words of man’s
“ wisdom, but in demonstration of the
“ spirit and of power;—when the foolish
“ things of the world were chosen
“ to confound the wise, the weak things
“ of the world to confound the things
“ which were mighty, and base things
“ of

“ of the world, and things which are
“ despised, and things which are not,
“ to bring to nought things which are;
“ —in short, when the FAITH stood
“ not in the wisdom of men, but in
“ the power of God :”—In this æra of
miracles, when they were taught to de-
pend solely on the suggestions and suc-
cours of the spirit for light and renova-
tion, when the canon of the evangeli-
cal Scriptures was yet unsettled, and
the writings of the Apostles remained
detached, dispersed, and perhaps in the
possession of a few only;—at this pe-
riod, my lord, the arguments for hu-
man learning might seem neither so
conclusive, nor so well applied.

Yet even then, the propriety, perhaps
the necessity, of the rational cultivation
of the mind appeared in full force to the
Apostle of the Gentiles. His instruc-
tions to his episcopal pupil on this
subject are animated, urgent, and par-
ticular,

ticular. The example of the Master himself must have added much weight to his philological admonitions. His erudition must have been well known to his juvenile correspondent, and we find him, in one of his epistles to him, in the true dialect of a scholar, expressing an emphatical,* and rather an *impatient* wish for the "arrival of the books," but *especially* of "the parchments" which he had left behind him.

STILL, had this *attachment to science* been peculiar only to St. Paul, it might have been referred to culture, to institution, or to habit: And might have come, with no impropriety, under the idea of a *learned prejudice*. But then, other apostles, who seem neither to

* Σπευδασον ελθειν προς με ταχως· and soon after he subjoins Τον φελονην ον απελιπον εν Τρωαδι παρα Καρπω, ερχομενος φερε, και τα βιβλια, ΜΑΛΙΣΤΑ τας μεμβραναις.

2 Tim. Chap. iv.

have

have had the same advantages of *scho-*
lastic education, nor to have possessed
a taste so adapted to *literary* research,
nor to have written in so lofty and *sci-*
entific a stile, have given evident proofs
that they were well aware of the incon-
venience of ignorance and incapacity in
the church, and desirous, even at that
early period, to adorn and strengthen
it by the *force* and *embellishments* of
ERUDITION. The *Gymnasia* of the an-
cient Christians, erected in cities of
consequence, of commerce, and public
resort, were *academic* foundations fur-
nished with professors of the *sciences*,
as well as of theology. Some of these
literate establishments could boast of
apostles and patriarchs for their found-
ers, and we have the authority of the
most respectable and authentic ecclesi-
astical history to assure us, that ST.
JOHN himself enriched Ephesus with an
endowment of this sort: whilst, again,
the *Catechetical* school of Alexandria,
so

so renowned for its succession of learned masters, claimed the high honour of referring its original institution to ST. MARK.

Now, my lord, if, in that illustrious age, when the *Sun of righteousness* darted his choicest rays, and shed his benigneſt influence on his riſing church, this reſpect was had, and this attention directed, to the acquisition of *human learning*; of how much *greater* consequence ought we to deem it in these dark and cold days, when illumination is imparted in the way, as it were, of nature, and inspiration is diſpenſed to us in a proportion, on the comparison, ſmall, ſcanty, and penurious!

BUT *prudence*, no leſs than neceſſity, drives us to this reſource. The perſonal dignity and *parochial* credit of a clergyman, *both*, require that he ſhould be well *reſpected as a ſcholar*.

Learning

Learning has been, and is, still, held in general estimation, amongst the lower orders of mankind. Intellectual pre-eminence commands indeed *universal* homage. But it is a sort of superiority to which the *vulgar* look up with veneration, with awe, I had almost said, with adoration. *A man of letters* they regard as more than sufficient for any *sublunary* department, as instructed in more than *mortal mysteries*, as versed in the language of *spirits*, and as peculiarly qualified to comprehend, to interpret, and to unfold the language and dispensations of God to mankind. In such a character they repose implicit trust. To him, with a certainty of relief, they impart their scruples, they confess their errors, they unload the labouring conscience, they freely express their apprehensions, and fully reveal the anguish of their souls. To his instructions they attend in health, and in sickness expect his consolation

solation. In their deepest distress they have recourse to him for support : even in the last moments of existence, on him they cast an exploring eye, and with their parting breath implore and gratefully return his blessing. To scenes like these, my lord, I have been sometimes witness : and am not ashamed to say that I have been wonderfully affected, edified, and even elated by them. Here, my lord, none but a minister of good sense, of rational piety and overflowing sensibility, can conduct himself with any degree of propriety. In the dark hour of palpable dereliction and of approaching death, the sinking, exhausted patient requires a spiritual counsellor, of acknowledged skill, and of approved firmness. The *unexperienced*, and the *illiterate*, on these trying occasions, exhibit only a melancholy spectacle of embarrassment, of stupidity, or of silence. When they remain mute, it
is

is through incapacity or confusion : and when they speak, they neither enlighten, nor establish ; they neither cheer, nor strengthen ; they neither alarm, nor soothe ; they neither command attention, nor administer peace.

Look we around us, my lord. Let us scrutinise the *moral* phenomena, and contemplate the living manners, as they rise before us. After this investigation, honestly and impartially pursued, let us, with equal sincerity, enquire what it is we stand most in need of, and in what the present state of society seems most defective. Every well-disposed heart will conclude, even on a cursory view, that we want amongst us, a spirit of integrity, of virtue, or of religion. In short, we want PRINCIPLE. But how, my lord, is this grand desideratum to be acquired ; and how, or by whom, is this particle of the ætherial spirit to be infused ? The
precise

precise means by which this blessed change is to be effected, I will not presume to determine. I will not take upon me to say what might have been done, by a clergy aggregately respectable for their learning, and individually uniform in their conscientious exertions. But one thing I feel it my duty to declare, and I have confidence in the assertion, that the predominant propensities and master vices of mankind will never be either corrected or subdued, by adopting into the church, either the *off-scourings of the army*, or the *dregs of the tavern*.*

RELIGION, my lord, is sufficiently unfashionable, and piety already too odious.

* In time of peace, few officers of a generous spirit relinquish their station: in time of war, none. In either case, small honour can accrue to the church, from such deserters. The aims and ends of these professions are as opposite as their separate habits. The *scions of the army* are ill adapted to the *soil of the*

odious. The ministerial order sinks daily into deeper contempt. Even the *episcopal* authority and character have lost much of that esteem and popularity in which they were formerly held; and it is no groundless complaint, that small respect is had to *seasons*, to characters, and to things, in better times universally esteemed sacred. Your lordship, has written very freely and forcibly on this subject, and in the most animated manner, and by the most awakening and pathetic motives, endeavoured to recall the devious, desultory mind to more serious and reverential habits of attention. That the *Sabbath* likewise is despised by many,

the *church*. Examples are not wanting which demonstrate this incongruity; and a recent event should, it might be expected, render the prelacy extremely cautious in their introduction of *Eleves* from so sanguinary a school. Yet notwithstanding this, the author of these observations has in his mind a very late instance of this *unnatural transplantation*.

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and

and profaned by more; and that the services and ceremonies of the church suffer by increasing difesteem and desertion, are truths too notorious to be disputed, and too alarming not to impress the well-disposed contemplator with the most melancholy forebodings. In short, my lord, the current of opinion, of inclination, and of fashion, sets strongly against every appearance of seriousness in doctrine, sedateness in principle, and severity in conduct. Now to this headlong torrent is it advisable to oppose the *futile* efforts of weak, *unfurnished*, and *illiberal* minds? Will they recommend Christianity by their generous ardour? Or will repudiated piety, by their amiable address, regain the general homage? Will the wicked relent, will the wanderer return, will the apostate reclaim at their bidding? Will they by a more fervent zeal, or by *additional arguments*, stagger the unbeliever, establish

bliss the weak, confirm the wavering, and encourage the upright, Christian? Will they with *prompt ability*, expose the absurdities, and with resistless *force of argumentation*, refute the errors of the adversaries of the church? And whilst with *masterly superiority* they beat down the assumed *principles*, will they with generous discretion exhibit all decent regard and fraternal affection for the *persons*, of their opponents? Will our churches be better or oftener frequented, and will our congregations, be either more numerous, or more respectable? Will the profligate man of pleasure, who from some loquacious, shallow sophist, has imbibed the wretched philosophy of the Continent, be brought over by such admonishers? Will the travelled libertine who consoles his vices, and soothes the concealed anguish of his mind, by the senseless system of *Materialism*, be induced to adopt a sounder

creed by such mock-instructors? Will he not rather regard the religion of *this* country, as he has been taught to esteem, that of every other, either as superstition, or bigotry, or hypocrisy, or imposture? Will not *appearances* favour and corroborate his suspicions? Will he not be apt to say, that even the avowed and public guardians of it, grow weary of their charge, if not ashamed of their profession?—And that those who are in the supposed secret, have either been so ingenuous, or so *unguarded*, as to betray it, by the appointment of such awkward, absurd, and inefficient defenders of it? Will not the *Infidel* triumph? Will not the *Dissenter* justly deride the low disgrace to which our own folly has reduced us? Will not the honest *Churchman* be compelled to hide his averted head, to conceal the unavoidable confusion of his face, and to dissemble the sharp sensations which corrode and fester at his
his

his heart? In the mean time, my lord, where are the SOULS, and in what state is the SALVATION of thousands? What can repair the *infinite* injury they sustain, or what make good the damage done to their *immortal* hopes and interests? * Where does the guilt of this spiritual famine lie? And to whom is the punishment due? † “Will not the “Judge of all the earth do right? And “these sheep, what have they done?”

BUT, my lord, I pursue this series of inauspicious inquiries no farther. I find myself too strongly affected by

* Και δια την τε ενος απειριαν, ο πολυς λεως εις εσχατον ολεθρον καταφερεται.

CHRYSTOST. de Sacerd. Lib. IV.

† Εξ ισης οιμαι ειναι δεινον, το, τε της χρησιμης απεργειν, και, το, της αχρειας εισωθειν· και τωτο δε γινεται ινα μηδαμοθεν παραμυθιαν ευρειν μηδε αναπνευσαι δυνηη τε Χριστου το ποιμνιον. Ταυτα εν 8 μυριων αξια σκηπτων; Ταυτα 8 γεγεννης σφοδροτερας, 8 ταυτης μονον της απειλημενης ημιν;

them; and tremble at the tremendous conclusions to which they lead the anxious, exploring, mind. I hasten, therefore, to relieve myself and your lordship, by drawing this unpleasant subject to an end:—And will only beg your lordship's farther attention, whilst I offer some few arguments in vindication of the manner and spirit of this address.

PRINCIPLE, my lord, often urges us to different duties of very different complections, and of very opposite influence upon us. Religion, now, invites us to a feast, and, now, summons us to make a costly sacrifice. In our *spiritual*, as well as our *social*, exertions, we experience much both of pleasure, and of pain;—and in the *exercise* of a *good conscience*, we sometimes suffer, and sometimes enjoy. The persuasive, is certainly, more eligible than the petulant, manner in writing: Yet severity
is

is not seldom requisite. There are times, when expressed disgust is not only seasonable, but laudable; and in some instances, to be silent would be to approve. To exhort, is a task neither difficult nor discouraging; but to *reprove* and *rebuke*, though not so satisfactory, yet are oftentimes not less indispensable, injunctions. Encomium, it must be acknowledged, is pleasing, both to him by whom it is dispensed, and him to whom it is directed; yet some occasions there are, where *censure* is allowable, and *invective* itself not only allowable but *necessary*.

Now, if there is a subject, my lord, in the agitation of which, it is permitted to blend *acrimony* with animation, and *satire* may be suffered, with impunity, to point her poniard, it is certainly that from which the preceding observations originate. I know no subject which has more intimate

reference, or nearer connection with the present and future interests of mankind. I know none which has, or might have, more influence on the manners and morals of individuals, or on the order and happiness of society. Mistake here, my lord, partakes of the nature, and produces all the mischiefs, of *guilt*: and this *guilt*, from its extent and effects, is always atrocious, because always avoidable; and oftentimes unpardonable, because oftentimes *irremediable*. There can be no shame in *openly reprobating* what others have not been ashamed *openly to transact*, nor can it be said that I have exposed or aggravated what was before *well known*, and could not be too *ill received*, by an insulted public.

IF, contrary to my inclination, I have been obliged to *allude* to particular persons, the necessity of the case will justify this peculiarity. An accusation, without

without the support of facts, would have been deemed groundless and nugatory. Amidst a number of facts, that seemed most proper to be adduced, which was both most recent and most reprehensible: And this fact unavoidably led to its agents and abettors. The *names** of these agents have been carefully concealed, and they have been treated with a tenderness which they had no right to expect, and which the nature of their transaction by no means merited. The public, I am assured, will

* AN author of signal benevolence and good sense, and, though a foreigner, a friend to the reformed clergy, speaking of *general reflections* against this venerable body, severely condemns them; and points out a mode of attack which he deems more generous, and which he thinks would be more useful. The writer of this letter hath pursued this method as far as he thought it decent, and as far as he could in consistence with that regard which he, and every one, owes to an order of men, by their very profession (if they would themselves respect it) respectable, and by their destination, valuable. " C'est
" en

will approve what I have said, if they only think that I have said enough. One thing I can assert with great truth, that I have not said nearly so much as I have heard. No affair of the like nature ever made the like noise, or was ever repeated with such general indignation, derision, and detestation.

The *station of* PRELATES, my lord, remote from the public eye and intercourse, is very unfavourable to a free and full exposition of the truth. Secluded from the common sight, they are seldom made acquainted with the

“ en attaquant tels, ou tels, par *leur noms* ; en les
 “ traduisant comme des hommes indignes de remplir
 “ des places aussi honorables, qu’importantes qu’on
 “ produiroit du bien. Voila ou i’l y auroit de la
 “ generosité ; & non dans ces *attaques generales*, qui,
 “ etant injustes par la meme, ou ne portent sur per-
 “ sonne, ou portent, malheureusement pour l’hu-
 “ manité, sur la classe d’hommes, dont elle auroit
 “ à attendre le plus de bien, ”

DE LUC.

common

common sentiments, of mankind. They are furrounded by those who are either unable, or afraid, or unwilling, to give them real, whenever it would prove disagreeable, information. I might, perhaps, presume therefore, that, in exhibiting the foregoing deduction of particulars, I have been doing a service neither unuseful, nor unacceptable, to the bishops in general. But, to speak honestly, my lord, I am not careful about this matter. I have been nurtured in ideas, and am matured in the habits, of independence. I have no fears to repress the innocent warmth of my sentiments: I have no sordid interests to make me stoop to servile acts of adulation.* I shall ever prefer truth
to

* IF CHRISTIANITY does not carry us as far as the *vaunting philosophy* of the *Stoics* carried the slave Epictetus, we must blame our own lukewarmness or incredulity. What a noble soul, what exalted sentiments does that instructive moralist exhibit! Who can be unaffected on the perusal of the following
senten-

to convenience, and trust I shall continue to derive sufficient strength and resolution, from the Supreme Source of power and intelligence, to make every *other* consideration bend to the *higher regards* of *duty*. In the present affair, in particular, I draw much consolation from the reflection, that I possess a conscience altogether “void of” criminal “offence, towards God and towards man.” I have performed what I regarded as an *incumbent obligation*. “What I have written, I have written.” I am neither disposed to repent, nor to retract. The scandal given was immense, and the offences committed were from the first, and are at this moment, considered as misdemeanours of no light

sententious, though concise, magnanimous, yet truly devout reflections? Ἀλλοις ταῦτα, ἐμοὶ δ' ἐκνεπταὶ περὶ πάντων, εἰς ἐμὲ ὁδεῖς ἐξέστιαν ἔχει· ἡλευθερωμαὶ ὑπὸ τῆς θεῆς, ἐγγνώμα αὐτοῦ τὰς ἐντολάς, ὅποτε ὁδεῖς δελαγωγῆσαι με δύναται· καρπίστην ἔχω οἷον δεῖ, δικάσας οἷος δεῖ.

ARRIAN EPICTET. Lib. IV. C. vii.

account.

account. It was fit, it was *necessary* that some opposition should be made to them. I have only to lament that this opposition does not proceed from a more *respectable* quarter. I mean, that it is not urged with more weight, expressed in language of greater force, and conveyed in terms of severer import.

BUT, my lord, though I *will* be independent, it is not my purpose to be insolent. When Bishop Burnet had just passed the age of minority, he drew up, with unparalleled freedom, a remonstrance* against some of the bishops of that æra. This remonstrance consisted of many distinct and serious charges, and went to prove that these right reverend

* THE cause and consequence of this *fally*, as the bishop calls it, may be seen at large by consulting the HISTORY OF HIS OWN TIMES, vol. I. p. 364, 12mo.

divines were guilty of much levity in discourse, and much license in conduct. However, he *printed* it, and, with undaunted confidence, subjoined his *name* to the publication. The *zeal* of this prelate, in some instances, *almost ate him up*; and, it must be acknowledged that he was inclined to be of the *subacid* temperament. In this very case, he seems to have given too much way to his predominant humour. His crimination was *absolute*; and though, in a limited sense, well founded, yet was not qualified by any exceptions either of particular better characters, or tendencies. Now, though I admire that honest impartiality, which stimulated him to renounce all respect of persons, and approve that spirit which prompted him (though not without former precedents) to so bold a reprimand; yet I am on no account inclined, in servile imitation of so ill-natured an example, to censure my superiors, without moderation

deration and without mercy. Though I will never, by any undue methods, court the favour; yet I shall always be careful, by no *unprovoked* attack, or *groundless* calumny, *wantonly* to incur the displeasure of those whom Providence permits to preside over his church.

AFTER having said so much, therefore, in the stile and spirit of a *censor*, the more credit may be due to those observations which I hazard as an *honest panegyrist*. If it is allowable to "laugh where we must," it is only just to be "candid where we can." To condemn in the lump, is both illiberal and indiscreet. In the present instance, it were both unjust and ungrateful. No one has a more sincere esteem of that *useful learning*, none has a more serious reverence for that *rational piety*, which many of our bishops possess in so eminent a degree, than

than the writer of this Letter. Some of them, with pleasure it is here asserted, do honour to their order and to humanity, and most of them conduct themselves, upon the whole, with the most becoming prudence and propriety. To the abilities and sufficiency of some of them, the most honourable testimony may be borne, without the most distant imputation of flattery.

THE various, the ornamental, the profound literature of Dr. H——d, baffles eulogy, and would be diminished and degraded by any poor attempts of mine to ascertain and estimate its intrinsic merit. The classical genius, the strong sense, the firm loyalty, the metro-political dignity and discretion of Archbishop M——m, do him the most distinguished credit. The critical acumen, the controversial superiority, the deep and ancient erudition, and the professional attention of
Bishop

Bishop L—th, cannot be too highly respected. To Dr. N——,* the public is indebted for his instructive, elaborate and learned DISSERTATIONS. The ingenious particularities of the Bishop of C—le are well known to the literary world. The character of Dr. H—x, as an academic tutor, is high;—and he has been distinguished as the preacher of Bishop Warburton's Lecture at Lincoln's Inn. It is to be presumed, therefore, that he will be resolute in the requisition of that learning from his young divines, which he has been in the habit of infusing;—and that he will suffer no *abatements* of that discipline in the *church*, which he knew, so well, how to maintain in *college*. The correct language, the amiable temper, the easy condescension and re-

* THIS venerable prelate died since the paragraph above was written :—But if, : is reported, he is to be succeeded by Dr. B——t, the prelacy will suffer no diminution of its lustre, nor the See have reason to regret his *translation*.

siftless address of Dr. H——fe, have gained him much and merited esteem. Bishop M——re is candid, conscientious, and of most respectable reputation. The Bishop of C——r's character as a real lover of his country; his encouragement of rising merit, the generous assistance he has given to others, and the active part he hath himself taken, in a minute research into the population and best natural resource of this country,—above all, the excellency, the pathos, the piety of his discourses, his power and popularity as a Christian preacher, and his devout zeal as a Protestant prelate, give him principal rank amongst the very first characters of his order.

How much, my lord, to be regretted is it, that amidst this *constellation of burning lights*, so indelible a stain, as that complained of, should be permitted to deform the beauty of holiness

ness in the church! How much is it to be lamented that the least cause has been given to so disgraceful a reflection upon the episcopal name and function! The herd of mankind, my lord, distinguish not with precision. They judge hastily, they condemn heavily. The bishops may exhort, admonish, and reprove with all propriety and energy, and their monitions to others respecting their duty, may be enforced with much authority and power: They may deliver annual, biennial, or triennial charges as good as, and there cannot be better than, that which your lordship has made public; in short, their doctrine may be unexceptionable, and their exhortations to others, beyond measure edifying and instructive.—Yet after all, one example of supineness, of neglect, of relaxation of discipline, of ignorance connived at, or immorality suffered to pass with impunity, will have more weight with the

prejudices of a perverse world against them, will speak more loudly, and spread more extensively than the best effusions of the best head amongst them all. One indiscreet act of one bishop, will be attributed to all; whilst only a small number of weak and worthless clergymen, degrades and sinks the general body to the same low level of contempt.

WHAT extreme vigilance, what jealous care, what affected caution do we see exhibited by *other* professions and conditions of men, to preserve their rank undisgraced by the admittance of unqualified, and their honour uncontaminated by association with unworthy, members. If we look into *religious* societies, those Dissenters who adhere to the principles of the *old*, Presbyterians, and those who, having renounced in part the creed of their fore-

forefathers, fall under the denomination of the *new*, are equally careful in the instruction of their respective teachers. They would consider their tenets as disgraced by weak abettors. They have a decent pride in the *literary* qualifications of their ministers; and would, with honest scorn, reject many of those who find too ready an admission into the church. If we examine the *military* establishment, the diminutive, and the debilitated, are excluded from the dignity of a martial commission. If we regard those regulations and distinctions which custom and civil policy have established to discriminate *rank in society*, the same tenacious circumspection meets our inquiries. The mean may not presume to encroach upon the mighty, nor the plebeian, on the patrician, order. The high, the *antient*, the *sacred* dignity of the Peerage, must be preserved pure and unpolluted. Not a shade
must

must obscure its splendour, nor even an imaginary stain be allowed to deform its immaculate purity. One would presume, my lord, that the clergy, without vanity, might lay claim to as much *antiquity*, and it will not be controverted, that they ought to possess as much *sanctity*, as senators. Yet, whilst the pretensions of those who are said to deserve ill neither of their sovereign nor of their country, are invidiously scrutinised, and called in question, to prevent their admission into the *House of Lords*, no qualifications are required, and no claims, however premature or unreasonable, rejected of some of those who have aspired and been admitted, to be ministers in the HOUSE OF GOD.

“THESE,” my lord, “are spots in our
“ feasts of charity, when they feast with
“ us, feeding themselves without fear :
“ Clouds they are without water, carried
“ ried

“ried about of winds: Trees, whose
 “fruit withereth, without fruit, twice
 “dead, plucked up by the roots, rag-
 “ing waves of the sea, foaming out
 “their own” (and, do we not deserve
 it? our) “shame.”

THE part to be adopted in this
 unhappy state of things, is obvious.
 “Thou shalt put away this evil from
 “thee, lest thou be snared therein, for
 “it is an abomination to the Lord thy
 “God. Neither shalt thou bring an
 “abomination into thy” holy “house,
 “lest thou be a cursed thing like it:
 “But thou shalt utterly detest it, and
 “thou shalt utterly abhor it, for it is a
 “CURSED thing.”

I AM so antiquated, obstinate, and
 even bigotted in my prepossessions, as
 to retain an extravagant admiration of
 the Bible. I am so vulgar as to profess
 a reverence for the established religion.

But

But I have one attachment, my lord, which is neither old nor popularly odious:—I am happy, that I can in one instance, be, at the same time, both fashionable and sincere:—and am not a little proud that I have it in my power, without singularity, and yet with much truth, to declare myself, my lord,

Your LORDSHIP'S

very respectful

and most obedient

humble Servant.

